UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/369
14 May 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 13 MAY 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 9 May 1997, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 9 May 1997 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the fourth monthly report on Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

On 18 April, I visited Sarajevo with the Permanent Representatives of the North Atlantic Council for discussions with the SFOR Commander, the High Representative, your Special Representative, other heads of civil agencies in theatre and the members of the Bosnian Presidency. In the meeting with the three Presidents, I took the opportunity to underline that, although much had been achieved in implementing the Peace Agreement, much still remains to be done, and that they themselves bore a heavy responsibility for achieving the peace, stability and prosperity which their people now expect. In this context I underlined such areas for priority effort as the proper functioning of the joint institutions, the return of displaced persons and refugees, the retraining and restructuring of local police and the conduct of the municipal elections.

I also took the opportunity to highlight a number of specific areas for future cooperation. First, I underlined the importance of an effective Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM), as foreseen in the Peace Agreement and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Secondly, I announced the setting up of courses designed for Bosnian military and civilian defence personnel at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, which should help encourage reconciliation within the armed forces. Thirdly, I stressed the need to open up three additional airports in Bosnia to civil aviation. SFOR is ready to assist in this, but the necessary memoranda of understanding needed to be signed with the Bosnian Government, and steps must be taken to reconstitute the Bosnian Civil Aviation Administration, as agreed at the London Peace Implementation Conference.

The visit reaffirmed in my mind the important role that the International Police Task Force (IPTF) has to play in consolidating the peace. I was therefore glad to learn that on your recommendation the Security Council has authorized the recruitment of 186 additional police for IPTF.

The North Atlantic Council's visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina was a useful one, and I hope that it will be possible to register progress in some of those specific areas by the time of the six-month SFOR review. In the meantime, SFOR will continue to build upon the achievements to date and will play its full part in bringing lasting peace to Bosnia. At the same time, we in the international community must continue to urge the parties themselves fully to respect their commitments under the terms of the Peace Agreement.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on SFOR operations

SFOR operations

1. There are approximately 33,000 SFOR troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with contributions from all the NATO countries and from 19 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the past month, SFOR has continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance through ground and air patrols, and to make random inspections of cantonment sites. Increased patrolling was maintained in Mostar, with SFOR continuing its close cooperation with the International Police Task Force (IPTF) in the city. An average of some 150 patrols have been conducted daily, and over 3,000 aircraft sorties and 5,000 helicopter sorties have been flown since the beginning of SFOR's mission.

3. SFOR troops were closely involved with preparations for the Pope's visit to Sarajevo on 12 and 13 April and provided a considerable contribution to the security arrangements. In total, 6,540 SFOR personnel were involved, in cooperation with the Office of the High Representative, IPTF and local police. All multinational divisions were involved in providing a secure environment, including anti-sniper operations, emergency ordnance disposal teams, the manning of observation points in Sarajevo and reinforced patrolling along main roads in and around the city. In addition, all major routes were monitored throughout Bosnia.

4. Support continues to be provided to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), with SFOR maintaining its regular, coordinated close air support training missions over Eastern Slavonia to exercise plans to provide close air support if necessary.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

5. Overall, the parties are assessed as being in general compliance with the military provisions of the Peace Agreement. However, over the past month there have again been isolated incidents of lawlessness, including attacks against religious buildings, both churches and mosques, in central and south-western Bosnia. Although there were no injuries, these attacks added to the climate of mutual fear and suspicion, especially in the run-up to the Pope's visit to Sarajevo on 12 and 13 April. Since the beginning of SFOR's mandate, 14 religious institutions have been severely damaged - five mosques, eight Catholic churches and an Orthodox church. These attacks have all been investigated by the civil police and IPTF.

6. In the month since the last report, SFOR troops have conducted approximately 261 weapons storage site inspections and monitored 240 authorized movement and training activities and 50 mine-clearing operations. Several minor

instances of non-compliance arose during the site inspections, all of which resulted in the confiscation and subsequent destruction by SFOR of the weapons concerned. In line with SFOR policy, the parties have now submitted plans for the 25 per cent reduction of their barracks and cantonments. Since the plans contained some duplications and questionable site locations, they were returned to the parties for correction and were resubmitted for evaluation on 21 April. The total number of sites currently stands at 787, which is a reduction of approximately 10 per cent from the Implementation Force (IFOR) baseline of 87[illegible] in August 1996.

7. In response to requests from the parties to carry out essential radar maintenance on air defence systems (which are in cantonment sites), it has been agreed that this activity may take place, subject to strict monitoring by SFOR.

8. The weapons and ammunition declared by the parties as a result of SFOR's temporary suspension of its confiscation policy (para. 5 of last month's report refers (see S/1997/257)) have now been moved into authorized cantonment sites and henceforward will be subject to SFOR's usual inspection policy. In all, over 300,000 small arms and grenades were declared, along with approximately 400 heavy weapons and 52,000 mines.

9. SFOR troops remain deployed in and around Mostar in order to prevent the recurrence of any violence. Over the reporting period SFOR, in cooperation with IPTF, dismantled a number of illegal checkpoints in the city. A Unified Police Force for Mostar has now been agreed, consisting of 100 Joint Police (50 Bosniac and 50 Croat), commanded by a Bosniac Commander and a Croat Deputy, with equal powers. IPTF will monitor the Force, which currently has an area of responsibility only in central Mostar. The Force's first patrol took place on 4 April.

10. With respect to freedom of movement, SFOR continues to support IPTF in the dismantling of illegal checkpoints. Since the beginning of SFOR's mandate, 81 illegal checkpoints have been reported, a significant decrease from 1996 when IFOR was disbanding approximately 80 per month. Between 1 and 28 April, 18 illegal checkpoints were reported. Nevertheless, freedom of return remains problematic and returns to the zone of separation have been hampered by security concerns following the Gajevi incident (paras. 7-9 of last month's report refers). However, there have been a number of spontaneous refugee returns over the past month, primarily to majority areas. In mid-April, SFOR personnel met with representatives from Gajevi and Celic in order to discuss the resettlement of Gajevi. Current plans call for the construction of prefabricated homes to commence at the beginning of May, with settlers moving in as soon as construction is completed.

11. At a Joint Military Commission meeting at the end of March, the parties put forward their plans for the demining activities to be carried out by their armed forces, and also submitted plans for training their soldiers in demining activities. These plans were approved by SFOR on 21 April. Over the past 30 days, more than 3,000 mines have been removed by the parties and 164 troops have completed their demining training. SFOR is encouraged by the demining activities conducted to date. It is noteworthy that, since 18 April, and for

the first time since October 1996, there is no training ban on the forces of any party in the theatre because of their progress in demining.

Cooperation with international organizations

12. SFOR continues to provide support within its capabilities to the international civil organizations in theatre. As noted above, SFOR's close cooperation with IPTF continues in Mostar, and elsewhere, most notably in Brcko. On 27 March, SFOR hosted a meeting with the new IPTF Commissioner and his Regional Commanders, with the aim of further improving coordination. In addition, over the reporting period, SFOR participated in joint working groups with IPTF, the Office of the High Representative and the parties in order to prepare for the 12 and 13 April Papal visit to Sarajevo. SFOR has established a Law Enforcement Support Team and is actively supporting an IPTF operational study and the tracking and analysis of organized crime.

13. SFOR continues to cooperate closely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in its preparations for the September 1997 municipal elections in Bosnia. SFOR has assisted in the identification and reconnoitering of voter registration centres and polling stations and is helping to man the Joint Elections Operations Centre. Planning is under way with the OSCE mission in Bosnia for SFOR to provide the security framework and other support as appropriate during the elections themselves. SFOR also continues to provide data on weapons holdings to OSCE to assist in its role in implementing the provisions of annex I.B of the Peace Agreement.